

**City of San Diego Long-term Resource Management Options Strategic Plan
Resource Management Advisory Committee**

ESD Auditorium, 9601 Ridgehaven Court, San Diego, CA 92123
Tuesday, Oct. 9, 2007, 3:00 – 5:00 p.m.

Meeting Summary

RMAC Members Present:

Fatih Buyukonmez, San Diego State University, Department of Civil and Environmental Studies
Kristen Byrne, San Diego County Disposal Association
Sylvia Castillo, Environmental Services Department
Chris Cate, San Diego County Taxpayers Association
Andrea Eaton, City of San Diego Council District 7
Richard Flammer, Integrated Waste Management Community Advisory Committee
Lynn France, Integrated Waste Management Technical Advisory Committee
Shirley Larson, League of Women Voters San Diego
Leslie L. McLaughlin, Navy Region Southwest
Rochelle Monroe, Environmental Services Department
Alan Pentico, San Diego County Apartment Association
Bill Prinz, Solid Waste Local Enforcement Agency

Project Team Members:

Christine Arbogast, Bryan A. Stirrat and Associates
Chris Gonaver, Environmental Services Department
Elmer Heap, Environmental Services Department
Bob Hilton, HF&H Consultants
Bryan Stirrat, Bryan A. Stirrat and Associates

Support:

Lewis Michaelson, Katz & Associates
Kelly Thomas, Katz & Associates

Introduction

Mr. Lewis Michaelson introduced himself as the neutral facilitator for the Resource Management Advisory Committee (RMAC) process. RMAC is scheduled to meet approximately every other month for two years to provide input on the development of a Long-term Resource Management Options (LRMO) Strategic Plan for the City of San Diego.

Welcome

Mr. Elmer Heap, Director of ESD, thanked the committee members for their time. Mr. Heap gave an overview of ESD's currently proposed waste management initiatives, such as a recycling ordinance, a construction and demolition waste ordinance, an increase in self-haul fees at Miramar landfill and a fee for refuse container replacement. These proposed changes will be presented to the San Diego City Council in the next few months. In addition, the city's proposal to increase the height of a portion of the Miramar landfill 20 feet is currently under an environmental review. Finally, ESD is considering a resource recovery center/transfer station at Miramar landfill. Mr. Heap explained that these projects, if all implemented, would only extend the life of the landfill another 10 years. The purpose of the study and the RMAC, then, is to develop options that could be implemented to sustain the city's waste management system over the next 25 years or more. He emphasized that the resulting plan will include several components,

and that the RMAC should take the approach of finding “silver buckshot” as opposed to a single, “silver bullet” solution.

Committee Mission and Principles of Participation

Mr. Michaelson reviewed the mission statement and principles of participation with the committee. Committee members concurred and adopted them.

LRMO Strategic Plan Process

Mr. Bryan Stirrat of BAS, who is contracted with ESD to conduct the LRMO Strategic Plan study, briefly explained BAS’s relevant background and role in the process. BAS is currently conducting a capacity analysis of all the waste management facilities and options in the city and county of San Diego and surrounding regions, including landfills, recycling facilities, rail hauling, Miramar landfill expansion and alternative technologies. BAS team members and HF&H consultants will also analyze the projected level of demand for waste disposal and will conduct a financial review of the city’s funding and economic analysis of selected options in Phase 2 of the study. The RMAC will assist in evaluating and prioritizing the options, and the highest ranked options will be analyzed in depth during Phase 2 of the study.

Environmental Services Department Overview

Mr. Chris Gonaver explained that the main mission of the ESD is to provide a sustainable solid waste management system for the city. In addition to refuse collection and disposal, ESD also manages curbside and green waste recycling programs, enforces city codes and conducts public outreach and education. The department also includes divisions for energy, sustainability and environmental protection.

Mr. Gonaver reviewed the fees collected at Miramar landfill, and committee members asked the following questions:

Q: What is the self haul fee?

A: Currently, self-haul is a flat fee of \$12. ESD is proposing to increase the rate to \$21 in 2008 and to \$30 in 2009. ESD predicts that \$2-3 million per year could be generated once the rates increase to \$30. ESD is presenting this proposal to the city council on Oct. 24. Increasing the self-haul rate will make ESD’s rates comparable to other solid waste fees and will encourage people who live distant from the Miramar landfill to use transfer stations instead.

Q: Is disposal of green waste free?

A: Individuals are not charged to dispose of green refuse, but landscapers may be charged \$25 per ton to dispose of large amounts of green refuse.

Q: What is the difference between the fees for vehicles under and over two tons?

A: Vehicles under two tons are usually personal vehicles, and a flat rate is charged instead of weighing the vehicle. Vehicles over two tons are weighed and charged a fee per ton, plus a franchise fee/Refuse Collectors Business Tax.

Q: What fund pays to pick up residents’ trash?

A: The general fund, which includes property taxes, sales tax and real estate tax, funds residential trash collection and disposal. It costs approximately \$37 million per year to collect and dispose of trash in the city, which is about \$14 per month for each residence. A breakdown of costs can be provided at the next meeting.

Q: Are other fees currently proposed to be increased?

A: The fee schedule includes other increases, though the self-haul fee increase is the most significant. A breakdown of fees collected at Miramar landfill can be provided at the next meeting.

Q: Are you anticipating the need to increase enforcement efforts after raising self haul fees? People may think the fee is too high and dump illegally.

A: ESD can address that issue, if necessary. People who dump illegally tend to do so regardless of the fee. It is hoped that by increasing the self-haul fee, most people will use other facilities, like transfer stations, over Miramar landfill.

Q: A waste characterization study has been circulating for a few years. Has this been updated? What is the current composition of Miramar landfill? What recyclables are coming into the landfill?

A: The last waste characterization study was specific to Miramar and conducted in 2000. Another study is not planned. Other reference information is available in a construction and demolition waste report. ESD staff will check with the recycling division to see if they are planning a study.

Q: It would be helpful to see who generates waste in each category.

A: ESD records the type and tonnage of vehicles that come to Miramar landfill, so those data are available.

Regional Overview

Mr. Bob Hilton of HF&H Consultants provided a summary of his background relevant to this study. HF&H is analyzing disposal capacity, demand and ESD's long-term financial management options. The preliminary results of these analyses show that the region (San Diego County) will reach its capacity between 2019 and 2021. Even if Miramar landfill were expanded and several other proposed projects were implemented, the waste disposal capacity in the county will still be reached within 15 years. Mr. Hilton emphasized that the city and county have a finite amount of disposal space and that the strategic plan needs to consider alternate options for disposing and managing waste.

Next Steps

The next RMAC meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, Dec. 5. At that meeting, Mr. Hilton will present the analysis of demand, capacity, and ESD's financial programs. The RMAC will begin establishing criteria to evaluate options and alternatives. At subsequent meetings, the RMAC will prioritize options and develop recommendations for which options should be further analyzed in Phase 2.

Before the next meeting, project staff will develop a Web site for posting committee information such as agendas and meeting summaries along with background information on waste management issues. Other outreach efforts will be discussed at the next meeting.

Questions from the RMAC

Q: Will you look at rail haul?

A: Rail haul is an option, and the BAS team is looking at other options. At the next meeting, RMAC members will be asked for input on a list of options BAS is evaluating and others that may be suggested. Because the BAS contract budget limits the number of options that can be analyzed, not all options (i.e. specific alternative technologies) will be reviewed. In Phase 2, the BAS team can focus on the financial, technical and environmental feasibility of the most promising subset of possible options.

Q: I heard about an Indian group that had room on its reservation for a landfill. Is that Gregory Canyon?

A: That is the Campo Indian group. They have prepared an EIS, which will not be distributed to the public until it is approved by the EPA due to their unique regulatory structure. Therefore, details such as the capacity of the landfill will not be known until the EIS is released.

Q: It would be helpful to receive information about options before discussing them so I can gather input from my group.

A: RMAC members would be given time to present information to their respective organizations before asking for input on options, or at least before concluding the committee's deliberation on the topic.

Q: Will we consider options similar to what is being done in Germany with waste to energy facilities? This technology has already been implemented in Montana. I strongly recommend looking to other country's activities and approaching waste management as solid resource management. It would be wise to consider this option if we are putting together a long-range plan.

A: San Diego has considered this option multiple times in the past, and it has been rejected each time. In addition, Proposition H restricts the ability to implement waste to energy technology because it prohibits the facilities from processing more than 500 tons per day and imposes setbacks to sensitive uses like hospitals and schools. While this option is not necessarily off the table, it is important to keep in mind that the options we recommend must be socially acceptable as well as economically and financially feasible.